

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05  
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 IO-13 /090 W  
-----059514 090857Z /20

O 090735Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3104

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS PDEV RH BC

SUBJ: THREAT OF SMITH ATTACK

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. BOTSWANA RADIO BROADCAST FOLLOWING  
ANNOUNCEMENT BEGINNING EARLY EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 8:  
QUOTE THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT  
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF IAN SMITH'S ILLEGAL REGIME HAS INSTRUCTED  
ITS ARMY COMMANDERS TO LAUNCH PUNITIVE ATTACKS AGAINST BORDER  
VILLAGES AND REFUGEE CENTRES IN BOTSWANA. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT  
THIS ACTION IS TAKEN AS PART OF THE REGIMES REVENGE CAMPAIGN  
FOLLOWING THE RECENT SHOOTING DOWN OF AN AIR RHODESIA VISCOUNT.

THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT IS INTRIGUED BY THE REGIME'S  
DECISION AS IT IS INDEED DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW INNOCENT  
BOTSWANA VILLAGERS AND HELPLESS REFUGEES, THE MAJORITY OF  
WHOM ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, COULD BE LINKED WITH THE CRASHING  
OF AN AIRCRAFT WHICH WAS SHOT DOWN BY A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE  
IN THE KARIBA AREA. THIS OMINOUS DECISION PROVES CONCLUSIVELY  
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THAT THE REGIME HAS IRREDEEMABLY EMBARKED ON A PATH OF BLOOD  
AND DESTRUCTION WHICH WILL INEVITABLY PLUNGE THE WHOLE OF SOUTHERN  
AFRICA INTO A BLOODBATH.

THE NINE THOUSAND ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEES WHOSE LIVES ARE NOW  
BEING THREATENED ARE A RESPONSIBILITY NOT ONLY OF THE BOTSWANA  
GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. FOR

ITS PART, BOTSWANA WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DEFEND THE REFUGEES AND THE SECURITY OF ALL ITS CITIZENS.

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT WISHES TO POINT OUT TO IAN SMITH AND HIS COHORTS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL THAT THE PLANNED MASSACRE OF VILLAGERS AND REFUGEES CANNOT CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY. END QUOTE

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. WE DISCUSSED ANNOUNCEMENT WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TIBONE WHO TOLD US THAT INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE RHODESIAN STRIKE AGAINST BOTSWANA CAME FROM "VERY RELIABLE" SOURCE. TIBONE'S FIRST REACTION IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUERY AS TO FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CONCRETE RHODESIAN PREPARATIONS FOR ATTACK WAS TO CALL ATTENTION TO BUILDUP OF "MERCENARY SOLDIERS" ACROSS FROM KAZANGULA. IN ADDITION TIBONE SAID RHODESIANS HAD RECENTLY ESTABLISHED "BASE CAMPS" ON BORDER FARMS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER SUCH ACTIVITY HAD BEEN ACCELERATED IN WAKE OF KARIBA INCIDENT. HE ADDED THAT GOB HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM "MUCH LESS RELIABLE SOURCE", ON TIMING OF POSSIBLE ATTACK, BUT HE DECLINED TO PROVIDE US WITH THIS INFORMATION.

3. IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE CONCERNING STEPS WE MIGHT TAKE TO ALERT AND PROTECT OUR CITIZENS IN NORTHERN BOTSWANA, TIBONE REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO ADVICE FOR US SINCE BOTSWANA ITSELF WAS SO WEAK THAT TIBONE (WHO AUTHORED GOB LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANNOUNCEMENT) HAD OMITTED IN IT ANY ADVICE FOR BOTSWANA CITIZENS. HE AGREED TO LET US KNOW IF FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING RHODESIAN INTENTIONS COMES TO GOB ATTENTION.

4. WE HAVE CONTACTED OUR E&E WARDEN IN FRANCISTOWN (WHO IS BAPTIST MISSIONARY IN THAT AREA) TO ENSURE THAT HE WAS INFORMED OF ANNOUNCEMENT. WARDEN REPORTED NO UNUSUAL ACTIVITY IN FRANCISTOWN. HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN IN RADIO CONTACT (AS IS NORMAL DAILY PROCEDURE) WITH TWO YOUNG BAPTIST MISSIONARIES ASSIGNED TO AGRICULTURAL BRIGADE FARM IN KASANE. THEY REPORTED HAVING HEARD FIRING FROM FOUR CORNERS (KAZANGULA) AREA FOR ONE HOUR SEPT 7 AND THIRTY MINUTES TODAY (SEPT 8). BOTH INCIDENTS OCCURRED AT APPROXIMATELY 1200 HOURS. BAPTIST MISSION HAS GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR ITS PERSONNEL IN KASANE TO STAY CLOSE TO THEIR HOMES AND AVOID ANY UNNECESSARY TRAVEL. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO OTHER AMCITS ARE RESIDENT AT KASANE.

5. COMMENT: GOB HAS IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN PAST ANNOUNCED RECEIPT OF INTELLIGENCE OF IMPENDING RHODESIAN ATTACK FOR PRIMARY PURPOSE OF DETERRING SUCH AN ATTACK BY MOBILIZING INTERNATIONAL OPINION. WE BELIEVE THAT CURRENT ANNOUNCEMENT IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS TACTIC, ALTHOUGH NO ONE CAN RULE OUT AN ACTUAL

RHODESIAN STRIKE. IN FACT SOME DRAMATIC RHODESIAN RESPONSE  
TO KARIBA INCIDENT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** THREATS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978GABORO02855  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
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**Review Event:**  
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**Review Media Identifier:**  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014